Pension Scheme for Older Persons

383. DR. MOHAN BABU : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the poor plight of older persons in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering to extend any pension scheme for their social and financial security; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Government through the Ministry of Rural Development is already implementing, since August, 1995, an old age pension scheme known as National Old Age Pension Scheme under the National Social Assistance Programme. Under this scheme, a pension of Rs. 75/- per month is paid to destitute older persons. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment also commissioned in August, 1998, a project OASIS (an acronym for Old Age Social & Income Security) to examine policy questions connecting with old age income security in India. The Committee has submitted its final report to the Government on 11.1.2000. The report contains recommendations on the schemes and action that Government may take to ensure that every young worker builds up enough savings during his/her working life which could serve as a shield against poverty during their old age. The recommendations contained in the report have a twin focus on further improving existing pension provisions and to devise a fresh pension plan for such workers who are not included in the present pension provisions but are capable of saving modest amounts and converting these savings into old age income security provision.

Reservation for Disabled in Private Sector

384. SHRI SURESH KALMADI :
MISS MABEL REBELLO :

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning to make it mandatory for the private sector to reserve 3 per cent vacancies for disabled persons;

(b) whether a bill in this regard is being introduced in the budget session of Parliament; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (c) There is a proposal to amend the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

Skill Development Courses for Handicapped

385. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of the handicapped trained to become economically independent through skill development in the years 1998-99 and 1999-2000;

(b) whether Government have any plan to start such skill development courses for this category of people;

(c) whether her Ministry intend to enlist the cooperation of the Corporate Sector in the rehabilitation of the handicapped; and

(d) what incentives it proposes to offer to the corporate sector to undertake employment of large number of handicapped?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) No such information is available. However, there are 17 Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) under the Directorate General of Employment and Training, Ministry of Labour. These centres evaluate the residual capacity of the disabled and put them into jobs for self-employment according to their capability. The number of persons with disabilities rehabilitated by these centres is given at Statement. (*see below*)

(c) and (d) (The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has had preliminary discussions with the Department of Company Affairs to explore the possibility of mobilising the corporate world and companies in providing support to the social services sector).

In order to provide job opportunities to the persons with disabilities, a provision has already been made under the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and full Participation) Act, 1995 the appropriate governments and the local authorities shall, within the limits of